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CHAPTER 3: THE OOTAKEMARU

M PREFECTURE
HEY, WHY DID WE STOP HERE?
YOU SURE ARE GOOD AT AVOIDING THINGS, AREN'T YOU, HARUMI?
NOW THAT'S A GOOD SPEECH
I HAVE TO GO BACK SOON! I HAVE A STRICT CURFEW YOU SEE ..
PLEASE STOP THIS!
NO! STOP IT!

WAIT. WHA... WHAT IS IT, OUTSIDE THE WINDOW ...?
GEEZ, YOU STILL ...
I... I'M SERI-OUS!
HII!!
HHHH!

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LAST NIGHT, THE BUDDHA STATUE IN THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE IN ISHINOMAKI AREA WAS FOUND CUT IN TWO BY SOMEONE. THIS MYSTERIOUS INCIDENT MIGHT HAPPEN AGAIN
THERE ARE MANY STRANGE HAPPENINGS LATELY, DON'T YOU THINK?
HAYASHI-SAN FROM THE NEIGHBORING CITY ALSO HAS MEMORY LOSS...
AND NOW THIS WHOLE BUDDHA STATUE INCIDENT...
THIS IS THE THIRD CASE THIS WEEK. THE CULPRIT MIGHT BE THE SAME PERSON...

PERHAPS IT'S A CURSE FROM THE ONI THAT WAS EXTERMINATED BY SAKANOUENO TAMURAMARO...
AUNTIE, THANKS FOR THE MEAL I PUT THE CHANGE HERE
OKAY, THANKS!
NEE, WHICH IS THE WAY TO THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE IN WAKUYA AREA?
AH, JUST GO WEST FROM HERE...
YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO VISIT THE TEMPLE AT THIS HOUR, TOURIST-SAN?

*TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: "BUU" HERE IS AN ONOMATOPOEIA TO THE TYPICAL SOUND YOU HEAR WHEN SOMEONE ANSWERS WRONGLY IN A TELEVISION QUIZ. SHE SURE IS PRETTY CHILDISH FOR A FREELANCE REPORTER...

IT SHOULD BE FREELANCE REPORTER-SAN!
BUU*! YOU'RE WRONG!
M PREFECTURE
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A LONG TIME AGO, SAKANO-UENO TAMURA-MARO EXTERMINATED AN ONI NAMED OOTAKE-MARU.
THAT ONI WAS SAID TO STILL BE SEALED UNDER THE SOIL OF THIS VERY PLACE.

THOUGH NOT OFFI-CIALLY REPOR-TED
THERE ARE ALREADY 16 PEOPLE IN THE M PREFECTURE WHO LOST THEIR MEMORIES IN JUST THIS ONE MONTH.
THE CAUSE TILL NOW IS STILL UN-CLEAR ...

THERE'RE NO SIMILARITIES IN SEX, AGE, TIME, PLACE, NOR OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES,
BUT ALL OF THEM REMEMBER ONE THING ...
ONI...
HII!! I'LL BE EATEN!
I'LL BE EATEN BY THE ONI!
IT WAS AN ONI ...
HOW SCARY ....
THE ONI CAME ....
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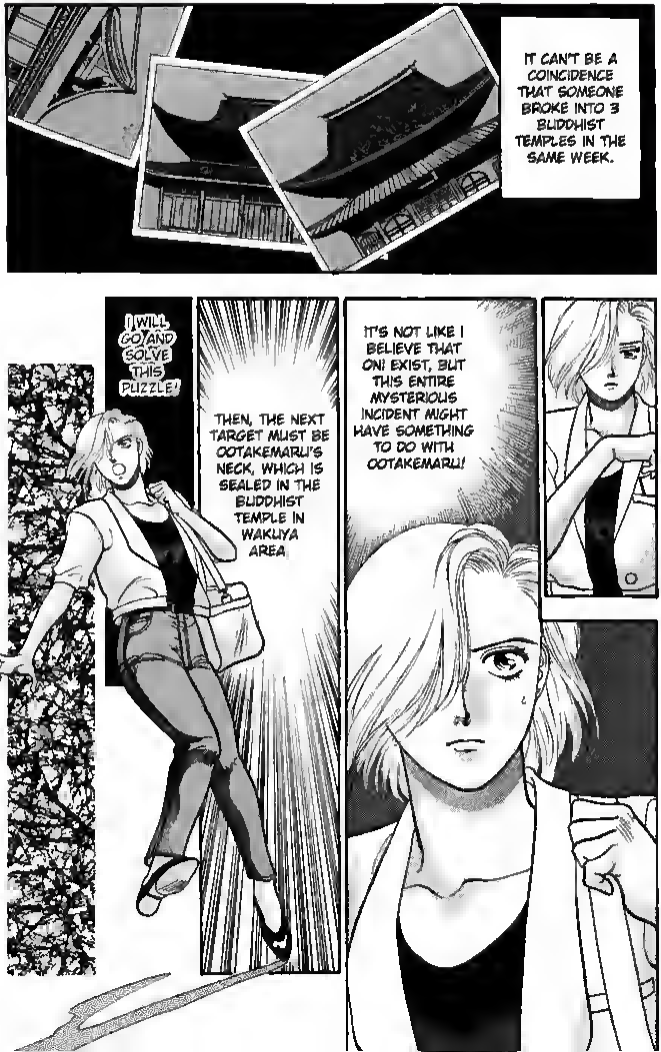
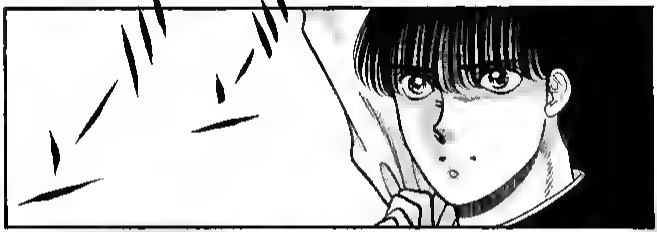
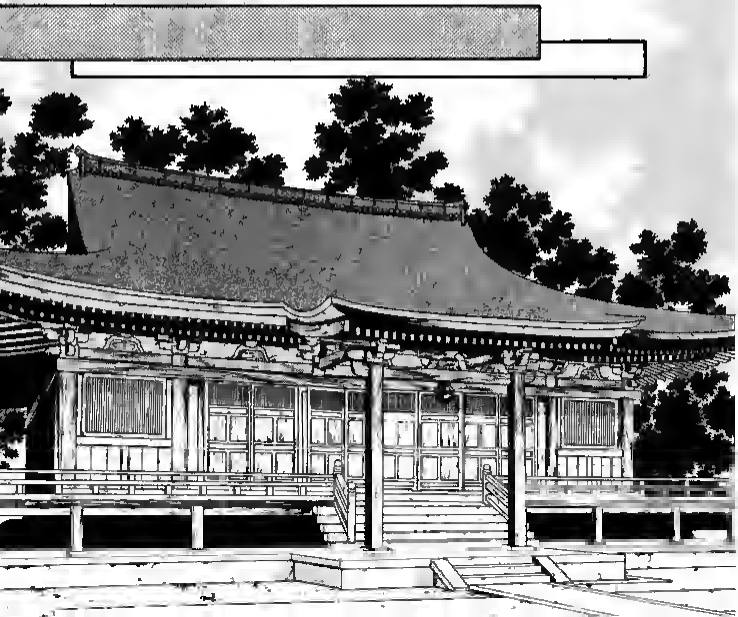
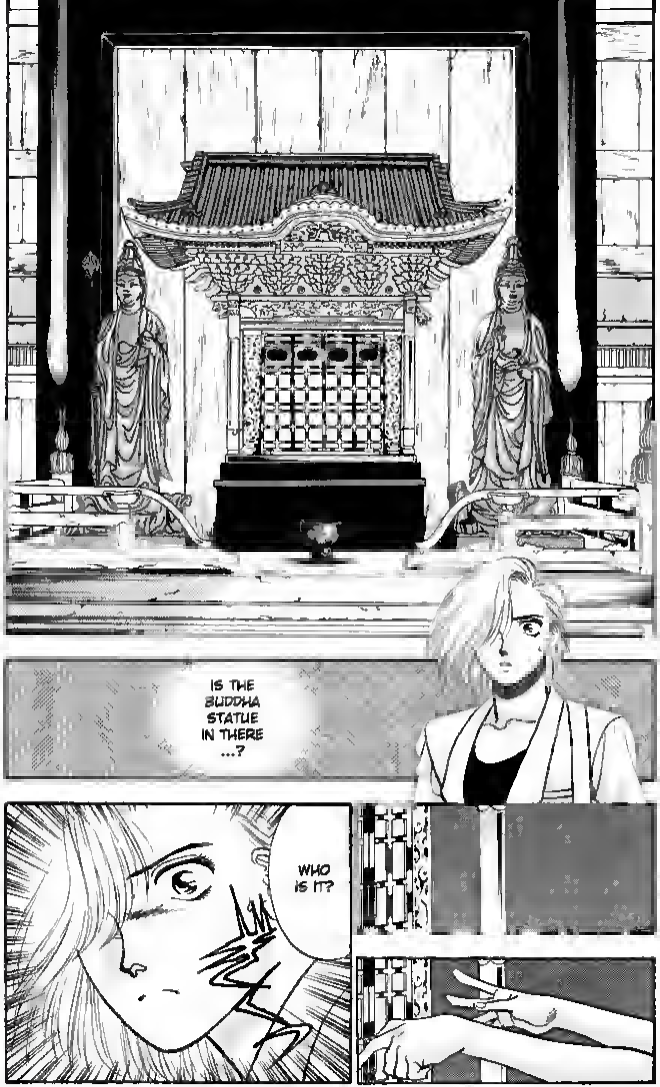
COME VISIT SOMETIMES, OKAY? M PREFECTURE IS SUCH A NICE PLACE
YOU'RE LYING, HARUMI!
I WILL MOVE TO M PREFECTURE THIS SPRING HOLIDAY.
HARUMI...
IN TATSUKOKU NO IWAYA (LATER NAMED I PREFECTURE),
LIVED A BARBARIC ONI NAMED OOTAKEMARU THAT WAS EXTERMINATED BY SAKANOUENO TAMURAMARO.
THEN SOMEONE NAMED JIKAKU MUTILATED THE BODY OF THE FALLEN ONI INTO PARTS. THE NECK WAS BURIED IN NONOMINE (M PREFECTURE, T DISTRICT, WAKUYA AREA). THE TORSO IN MAKIYAMA (M PREFECTURE, ISHINOMAKI AREA). THE LEGS IN TOMIYAMA (M PREFECTURE, M DISTRICT, MATSUSHIMA AREA), AND THE ARMS IN OOTAKE NO SANJUNA (M PREFECTURE, T DISTRICT, MINAMIKATA AREA). ALL OF THEM BURIED AND SEALED IN SEPARATE BUDDHIST TEMPLES


IT CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE THAT SOMEONE BROKE INTO 3 BUDDHIST TEMPLES IN THE SAME WEEK.
IT'S NOT LIKE I BELIEVE THAT ONI EXIST, BUT THIS ENTIRE MYSTERIOUS INCIDENT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH OOTAKEMARU!
THEN, THE NEXT TARGET MUST BE OOTAKEMARU'S NECK, WHICH IS SEALED IN THE BUDDHIST TEMPLE IN WAKUYA AREA
I WILL GO AND SOLVE THIS PUZZLE!





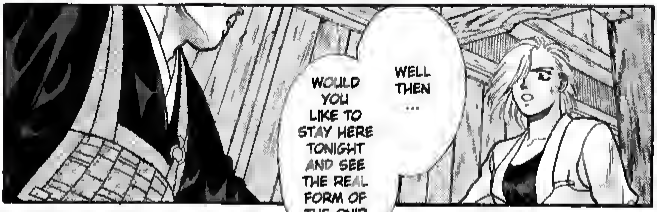
ERR...
WHY IS IT ...
I THOUGHT THERE WILL BE SOME HEAVY GUARDINGS, BUT...
ISN'T THIS A LITTLE BIT TOO QUIET ...?
GEEZ, IS IT REALLY OKAY TO ENTER LIKE THIS~??


IS THE BUDDHA STATUE IN THERE ...?
WHO IS IT?

EH?
AH!
IT'S.. IT'S NOT LIKE THAT! YOU'RE MISTAKEN!
TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: HOW VERY CONVINCING
I'M NOT A SUSPICIOUS PERSON*! I'M SAE GOTOU, FREELANCE REPORTER!
I THOUGHT THAT PERHAPS THIS TEMPLE HAS SOME CONNECTION TO THE SERIES OF TEMPLE VANDALISM CASES GOING ON LATELY.
EH? UM... IF THAT'S SO, YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT THE CULPRIT'S OBJECTIVE IS, HEAD MONK-SAN?
IT IS TRUE THAT OOTAKE-MARU'S NECK WAS SEALED HERE,
AND THAT THIS TEMPLE MUST BE THE NEXT TARGET.
HO... REPORTER-SAN, EH?

OOTAKE-MARU'S REVIVAL, IS IT NOT?
ARE YOU SAYING THAT OOTAKE-MARU REALLY EXISTS?
AND THAT THE INCIDENTS AT THOSE TEMPLES WERE CAUSED BY IT?
THIS IS THE WORK OF ANOTHER ONI...
NO, THAT WAS DONE FROM THE OUTSIDE, SO IT'S NOT OOTAKE-MARU'S DOING
WAIT...
WAIT A MINUTE, THIS HEAD MONK ACTUALLY BELIEVES THAT ONI EXIST?
HEAH, FORGET ABOUT IT..
ERR, DESPITE KNOWING ABOUT THE ATTACK, DON'T YOU THINK THE SECURITY HERE IS A LITTLE BIT LOW?
I MEAN, EVEN I CAN GET INSIDE THIS EASILY

THE ONE WHO DESTROYED THE BUDDHIST TEMPLES MUST BE AN ONI . .
BECAUSE YOU ARE HUMAN, ARE YOU NOT?
THAT'S WHY I SET UP A KEKKAI ON ALL FOUR CORNERS.
NO ONI WILL BE ABLE TO ENTER HERE .


WELL THEN ...
WOULD YOU LIKE TO STAY HERE TONIGHT AND SEE THE REAL FORM OF THE ONI?

BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT YOU'LL SURVIVE ...

I HAVE TO GO HOME!!
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THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE THE LEGENDARY ONI LIVES
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ME
I HAVE TO GO BACK TO TOKYO RIGHT NOW!
HARUMI
!

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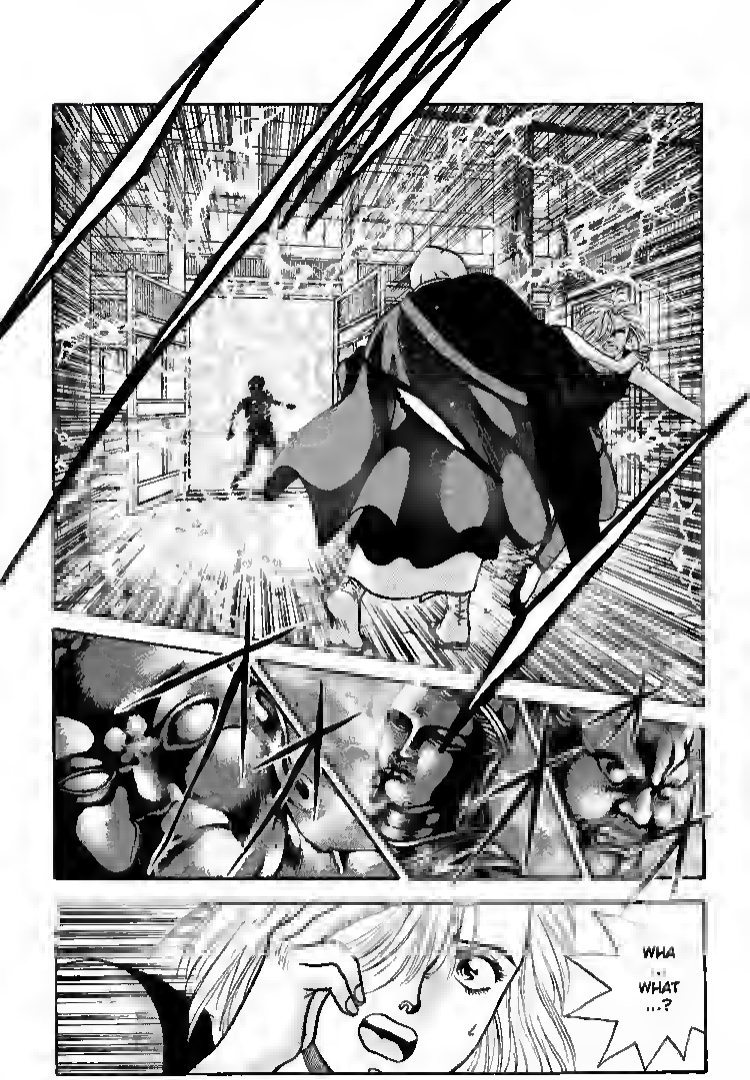
HOW FOOLISH ... YOU HAVEN'T GONE BACK?
I HAVE ONE MORE QUESTION LEFT ...

WHAT ABOUT THOSE PEOPLE WHOSE MEMORIES WERE LOST...?
THOSE THINGS HAPPENED BEFORE THOSE INCIDENTS AT THE TEMPLES
PERHAPS...
THE ONI THAT ATTACKED THOSE PEOPLE WAS TRYING TO RESURRECT OOTAKEMARU!
SINCE THE SUPPOSEDLY SEALED BODY PARTS OF OOTAKEMARU COULDN'T BE FOUND IN ANY OF THOSE TEMPLES
ONI AGAIN ...!!
ONI... ONI... ONI...!!
SUCH A THING AS ONI NEVER REALLY EXIST TO BEGIN WI...


WHA
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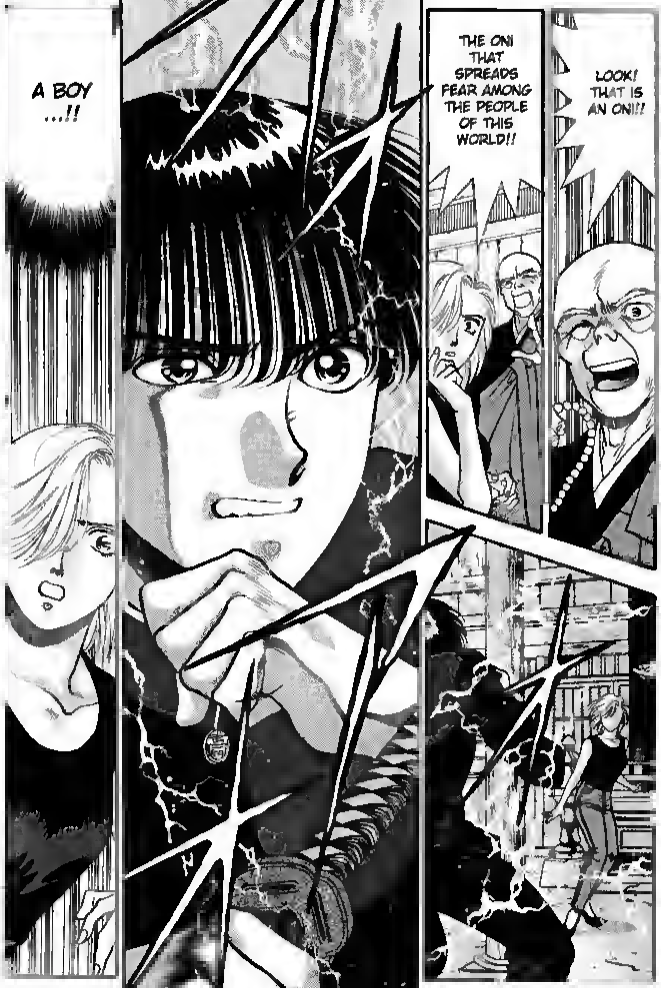
WHAT
...?


LOOK! THAT IS AN ONI!!
THE ONI THAT SPREADS FEAR AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD!!
A BOY ...!!

NO! IT'S AN ONI!!
IT'S A BOY! IT'S ONLY A BOY!
PLEASE! ENOUGH! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS ONI!
HURRY UP AND STOP THIS TRICK! THAT KID COULD DIE!
THIS KEKKAI CAN ONLY WORK AGAINST AN ONI!
THE FACT THAT HE CAN'T ENTER IS THE PROOF!!

OH! ... REALLY EXIST ...
OOTAKE-MARU ...
EVEN IN A DEEP SLUMBER, THE EVIL AURA THAT SEEPS OUT FROM THE WEAKENING SEAL BRINGS HARM TO PEOPLE!
THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR MEMORIES WERE ACTUALLY CAUGHT IN THE DREAM MADE BY OOTAKEMARU, WHO WAS STILL IN A DEEP SLUMBER. A SEAL IS ONLY A SEAL. IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT OOTAKEMARU IS DEAD!

TRUST ME!!
STOP, YOU ONI! ONI'S WORDS ARE NOT TO BE LISTENED TO!!
ONIKIRI-MARU...
I WILL SLAY THAT GUY WITH THIS ONIKIRIMARU!!
THE GREAT ONI-SLAYING SWORD WIELDED BY WATANABE NO TSUNA, ONE OF THE FOUR HEAVENLY KINGS, WHO KILLED THE SHUTEN DOUJI IN OEYAMA, TALES SINGLE-HANDEDLY
BEFORE SOMEONE ELSE GETS CAUGHT IN HIS DREAM ... THAT KEKKAI ...
FOR THAT PURPOSE ALONE, WE HAVE TO REMOVE THE SEAL AND REVIVE ITS REAL BODY BACK INTO THIS WORLD!!
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DON'T!!
THE BUDDHA STATUES THAT ARE LOCATED AT THE FOUR CORNERS
YOU'LL SLAY OOTAKE-MARU...? THEN...
HARUMI WILL ALSO GO BACK TO BEING HER OLD SELF ...?

UGH!!

DON'T !!
FROM THESE SEALED MAGATAMA, COME FORTH FROM YOUR ETERNAL SLUMBER, OOTAKEMARU!!!

AH,
AH
...
AH
...

ONI...! THIS IS THE LEGEN-DARY ONI OOTAKE-MARU!!
AN EVIL CREATURE WHO EATS PEOPLE'S SOULS THROUGH DREAMS ...!!

LIKE I WILL LET YOU DO THAT, YOU ONI ...!!
ARE YOU THE ONE WHO REVIVED ME...? MY THANKS TO YOU
DON'T LOOK INTO HIS EYES !!
SHUT UP, YOU BUG.
UGH.
I WILL ONCE AGAIN BURY THE SURFACE OF THIS EARTH.
UGH

KYAA!!
OH...?
A GIRL. EH?
HE CAN EVEN KILL WITH HIS LOOKS ...
SHOULD I EAT HER?
HU.
AH...
OR IMPREG-NATE HER ...?
AH...
SEEMS LIKE A WORTHY ONI TO BE KILLED, EH, ONIKIRI-MARU ...

ONIKIRI-MARU, YOU SAID ...?
IT'S YOUR KIND'S MORTAL ENEMY, THE ONIKIRI-MARU...
YOU'VE SEEN IT IN THE DEPTHS OF YOUR DREAMS, RIGHT ...?

PLEASE
SLAY THAT OOTAKE-MARU!...!!
SLAY...

YOU... YOU ARE THAT ONNARI-MARU!!
KYAA!!
TAKE A PICTURE!

!
THE GREAT ONIKIRI-MARU! ...!!
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A
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!!

WHAT PURE-BLOODED ONI! ONCE YOU LOSE YOUR SWORD, YOU'RE REDUCED TO A MERE HUMAN!!
UGH!!
THAT ONIKIRI-MARU ...
WHY DON'T YOU FEEL IT YOUR-SELF?!

HOW DOES ONIKIRI-MARU FEEL?!
THE FEEL OF BEING PIERCED IN THE FLESH!
DON'T TALK!
UGH...
YOU'VE FOUGHT THAT MONSTER LONG ENOUGH
ENOUGH ..!! THAT'S ENOUGH!

SO PLEASE ... YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH ...
I WON'T BE SATISFIED TILL I CAN FINISH HIM OFF, ONEE-SAN.
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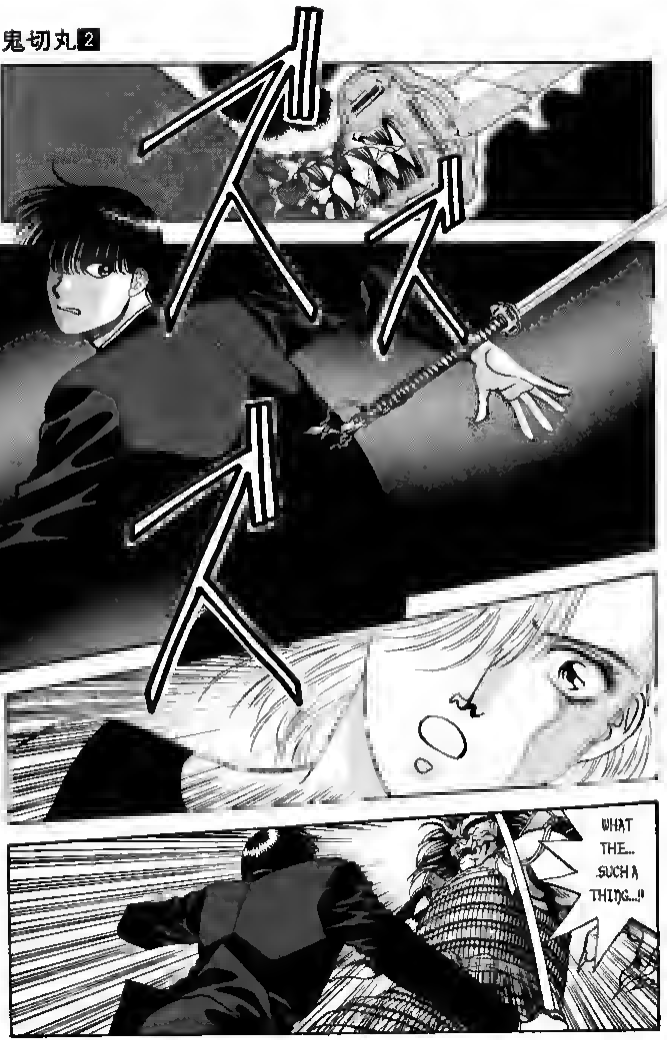
WHAT THE... SUCH A THING...!!

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I'M AN ONI BORN WITHOUT A HORN ...
THIS ONIKIRI-MARU! ... THIS SWORD IS MY HORN ...!! WE ARE PRACTI-CALLY ONE ...!

ALSO... YES...!! WHAT ARE YOU, REALLY?!
WHA... WHAT KIND OF ARTICLE SHOULD I WRITE IN MY COLUMN HEADING ...?
AND... WHAT SHOULD I TELL THE POLICE ABOUT THIS INCIDENT ...?
ISN'T THIS ALL JUST A DREAM ...?
ONEE-SAN.

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